DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 424 677 EA 029 456

AUTHOR	Lashway, Larry
TITLE	Standards for Administrators.
INSTITUTION	ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, Eugene, OR.; National Association of Elementary School Principals, Alexandria, VA.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	1998-00-00
NOTE	5p.
CONTRACT	RR93002006
AVAILABLE FROM	National Principals' Resource Center, 1615 Duke Street, Alexandria, VA 22314-3483 ($2.50; bulk discount).
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Serials (022) -- ERIC Publications (071)
JOURNAL CIT	Research Roundup; v15 n1 Fall 1998
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Administrative Principles; Elementary Secondary Education; Instructional Leadership; Leaders Guides; Leadership Training; Principals; Professional Development; *School Administration; *Standards

ABSTRACT

This newsletter reviews five reports that address the implications of standards for administrators. These texts include "Designing and Implementing Standards-Based Accountability System" (Education Commission of the States), which describes some of the policy implications of standards-driven accountability; "Why Principals Fail: Are National Professional Standards Valid Measures of Principal Performance?" (J. Douglas Coutts), which reports on the relationship between standards and on-the-job success for principals; "Skills for Successful 21st Century School Leaders: Standards for Peak Performers" (J. R. Hoyle, F. W. English, and B. E. Steffy), which provides a professional-development curriculum based on a synthesis of recent leadership standards; "Case Studies for School Leaders: Implementing the ISLLC Standards" (W. L. Sharp, J. K. Walter, and H. M. Sharp), which offers a series of case studies keyed to the Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards; and the Web site of the Council of Chief State School Officers, which offers the full text of the ISLLC report on performance standards for school leaders. Since ISLLC is a broadly based coalition, its standards represent a powerful and influential consensus on leadership. (RJM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED 424 677

Research roundup
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
VOLUME 15, NUMBER 1
FALL 1998

Standards for Administrators

Larry Lashway

Like a sailboat trying to make headway against shifting winds, the school-reform movement has spent 15 years tacking from one direction to another. Now the winds seem to have steadied, and the reform movement shows signs of finding a consistent course. Increasingly, reformers agree that effective change must begin with clear, rigorous performance standards.

Today, standards are the driving force for school reform, as virtually all states move toward some form of standards-driven accountability. When schools set explicit learning outcomes, students, teachers, and principals have clear accountability for results. When assessment is based on clear standards, student performance guides reform efforts.

New standards for students have been accompanied by new expectations for educators. While student achievement remains the ultimate measure of success, professional organizations have made progress in developing performance standards that should govern the actions of teachers and administrators. In the past 15 years, groups such as the American Association of School Administrators, the National Association of Elementary School Principals, the National Association of Secondary School Principals, and the National Policy Board for Educational Administration have proposed standards for school leaders. Most recently, the Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) has issued a comprehensive set of standards that, accompanied by a test, will be used for licensure in some states.

Although most school leaders welcome the idea of standards, the implications for daily practice may not be immediately clear. Aside from their obvious use in preparation programs and licensure, how will leadership standards affect principals on the job? Are standards a symbolic commitment to quality, or can they serve as a concrete guide for daily decision making? The works reviewed here provide a variety of perspectives on these questions.

The Education Commission of the States describes some of the policy implications of standards-driven accountability.

J. Douglas Coutts reports on the relationship between standards and on-the-job success for principals.

John R. Hoyle and colleagues provide a professional development curriculum based on a synthesis of recent leadership standards.

William Sharp and colleagues offer a series of case studies keyed to the ISLLC standards.

The Web site of the Council of Chief State School Officers offers the full text of the ISLLC report on performance standards for school leaders.

Larry Lashway is a research analyst and writer for the ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management at the University of Oregon.

The Education Commission of the States. **Designing and Implementing Standards-Based Accountability Systems.** Denver, Col.: Education Commission of the States, 1998. 42 pages. *Available from:* Education Commission of the States, 707 17th St., Suite 2700, Denver, CO 80202-3427. Attention: Gary Frank. 303-299-3600. $10.00 plus $3.00 shipping and handling.

EA 029 456

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

This report outlines the rationale for standards-driven education and explores the key policy issues that arise. While the authors are most concerned with academic standards for students, their recommendations apply equally well to standards for school leaders.

The essence of standards-driven education is accountability, not just to fix responsibility, but to generate essential data for school improvement. When results are compared to desired outcomes, any discrepancies will trigger questions and proposals for change. Using standards to set expectations for leaders also will eventually have an impact on professional development activities.

The report explores a number of policy issues that apply equally well to academic standards and leadership standards. First, everyone involved should be clear on the purpose and scope of the standards. Will they be used just to evaluate new hires, or will they apply to everyone? Will they determine rewards and sanctions? Will they be used in making decisions about professional development?

Second, school personnel must decide how performance and progress will be measured. Current administrative evaluation procedures are seldom aligned to standards, leaving principals with little guidance. Educators must be ready to ask, "How will we recognize that this standard is being met? What are the indicators?"

Third, schools must design follow-up procedures to apply the lessons that have been learned. In particular, decisions about professional development should be keyed to the assessment, and adequate support for development activities should be provided.

Finally, schools should inform the public about the accountability system, the results, and the improvements that are likely to result. Most parents and community members have little awareness of leadership standards and how their children will benefit.

In putting together an accountability system, policy makers and school personnel should realize that rigorous standards do not mean rigidity. One-size-fits-all thinking fails to recognize the diversity and individuality of today's leadership cadre. Moreover, because there is not always a clear link between leadership behaviors and student learning, there is no "right" way to develop an accountability system.

The authors make it clear that simply adopting or subscribing to leadership standards will accomplish little unless school boards, the central office, and site administrators are prepared to take concrete steps to use the standards as a basis for decision making.

Coutts, J. Douglas. **"Why Principals Fail: Are National Professional Standards Valid Measures of Principal Performance?"** *ERS Spectrum* (Fall 1997): 20-24. *Available from:* Educational Research Service, 2000 Clarendon Blvd., Arlington, VA 22201. 703-243-2100. $10.00 plus $3.00 shipping and handling.

Standards for school leadership are based on professional consensus; that is, practitioners and others with expertise in school leadership have agreed that success depends on achievement of designated standards. Groups such as the Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium have created an impressive degree of consensus on essential standards for school leaders.

However, such standards still await the decisive test: empirical evidence that they relate to success in the real world. Are school leaders who live up to the standards more likely to succeed on the job? J. Douglas Coutts has provided some preliminary evidence, based on a survey of Indiana superintendents.

Coutts asked the superintendents to think of the principal they had most recently removed because of poor performance, and then to indicate the degree to which this principal met each of the six ISLLC standards. The superintendents were also given a chance to list other factors that may have led to the principal's poor performance.

The superintendents cited failure to meet all six of the ISLLC standards as factors in the principal's poor performance. The most frequently mentioned standard was "advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth." The standard least often cited was "understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context."

The "other" category elicited a wide range of reasons, including "lack of people skills," "lazy," "lack of initiative," and "wasn't very smart."

Although Coutts believes his survey supports the validity of the standards, he advises caution in interpreting the results. Having identified a principal as a poor performer, a superintendent would most likely be predisposed to regard him or her as failing to live up to high standards, particularly when the standards were stated in abstract terms rather than as specific performance indicators. In addition, the study does not reveal whether superintendents were influenced more by standards in their judgments, or by idiosyncratic factors in the "other" category.

However, this study does represent a valuable first step toward the kind of research that needs to be done with the standards. School districts could do similar research themselves by developing assessments keyed to the ISLLC standards and correlating the results with on-the-job performance. Principals can only benefit from evaluation that is based on credible

professional standards rather than on subjective and unpredictable judgments.

Hoyle, John R.; English, Fenwick W.; and Steffy, Betty E. **Skills for Successful 21st Century School Leaders: Standards for Peak Performers,** 3rd edition. Arlington, Va.: American Association of School Administrators, 1998. 279 pages. *Available from:* AASA Distribution Center, P.O. Box 411, Annapolis Junction, MD 20701. 888-782-2272. $29.95 plus $4.50 shipping and handling.

Leadership standards have clear implications for those who aspire to become school leaders and for those who prepare school leaders, but what do they say to those already on the job? The authors of this recent volume provide an answer to that question.

Traditionally, school boards and central office officials have assumed that once administrators are certified, they will get most of their professional development through experience, with an occasional seminar or conference. Principals have often been left on their own to determine what they need to know.

On-the-job learning, however, is dictated by the demands of the moment, and the principal's learning horizon may extend only as far as resolving the current dilemma, with little incentive for analysis and reflection. The premise of this book is that leadership standards offer an important "curriculum" for lifelong professional development, especially as part of a structured program aimed at providing enhanced certification for experienced administrators. (For example, the American Association of School Administrators is creating a Leadership Institute for School Administrators, which will culminate in a performance assessment by a national board of examiners.)

The authors have built their book around a synthesis of a half-dozen sets of leadership standards. Topics include visionary leadership, policy and governance, communication and community relations, organizational management, curriculum planning and development, instructional management, staff evaluation and personnel management, staff development, educational research, evaluation and planning, and values and ethics.

In each section, the authors summarize the relevant theory and research, explain the importance of the topic to the leader's job, provide specific guidelines and tools, and end with a skill assessment and suggested activities and readings.

While the book is most useful as part of a structured professional development experience that allows for dialogue and interchange, it also provides a lucid guide for individual administrators who want to assess or enhance their own mastery of leadership standards.

Sharp, William L.; Walter, James K.; and Sharp, Helen M. **Case Studies for School Leaders: Implementing the ISLLC Standards.** Lancaster, Pa.: Technomic Publishing, 1998. 250 pages. *Available from:* Technomic Publishing, P.O. Box 3535, Lancaster, PA 17604. 800-233-9936. $44.95.

Today's leadership standards are based on performance: principals must not only have a thorough understanding of leadership demands, they must be able to act in accord with that understanding. As many administrator-preparation programs have learned, gaining those skills requires more than passively absorbing information.

One strategy that helps in making the transition from knowledge to action is the case study, which puts critical issues into a story format. A well-crafted case study can highlight the conflicting issues that make real-life dilemmas so difficult to resolve. Most people find stories to be a meaningful way of learning, and many can provide similar examples from their experience.

The authors of this volume have applied the case-study approach to the new ISLLC standards. Each case is designed to highlight one of the 96 performance objectives associated with the standards. For example, one performance objective—"recognizes and respects the legitimate authority of others"—is illustrated by a case in which a principal is confronted with numerous parental requests to have their children assigned to particular classrooms. The issue: Do parents (who presumably know their children better than anyone) have a right to make this choice?

Because the answer in this case, as in most, is not obvious, the ambiguity provokes considerable reflection and debate. Such case studies are well suited to the ISLLC standards, which are not a simple code of behavior but a sophisticated framework for thinking about professional responsibilities. Although not all of the 133 cases in this volume are presented in story form, they collectively succeed in giving concrete meaning to the standards.

About ERIC

The Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) is a national information system operated by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI). The ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, one of 16 such units in the system, was established at the University of Oregon in 1966.

This publication was prepared by the Clearinghouse with funding from OERI, U.S. Department of Education, under contract no. OERI-RR-93002006. No federal funds were used in the printing.

ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, 5207 University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon 97403-5207. Phone 800-438-8841.

The authors intended the book to be used in administrator preparation or leadership development programs, and its case studies work best in a group setting where conflicting issues can be examined from multiple perspectives. But small groups of principals could easily use the book as a tool for informal professional development sessions.

Council of Chief State School Officers Web site:
http://www.ccsso.org

Earlier efforts at setting leadership standards have not always had a high profile; many practitioners may be aware that the standards exist but have not actually seen them. This Web site, maintained by the Council of Chief State School Officers, offers the full report of the Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium on leadership standards. The material includes the background, the rationale, and a detailed listing of the six standards, each of which is further refined into more specific knowledge, dispositions, and performances.

Because the ISLLC is a broadly based coalition with representation from 24 states and virtually all the major professional associations concerned with school leadership, its standards represent a powerful consensus on leadership, and they are likely to be influential in the years to come. The Educational Testing Service has developed an assessment based on the standards, and four states have decided to require the assessment as part of their licensure procedure. □

For More Information

A number of earlier statements on standards, published by professional organizations of school administrators, are also available. For more information on these reports, including a link to the text of the ISLLC standards, go to this section of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management Web site: *http://eric.uoregon.edu/issue/training/resources.html.*

Research Roundup is published three times during the school year by the National Association of Elementary School Principals. Single copies: $2.50; bulk orders (10 or more): $2.00 ea. Virginia residents add 4.5% sales tax. Specify date and title of issue when ordering. Checks payable to NAESP must accompany order. Send to National Principals' Resource Center, 1615 Duke Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314-3483.

Annual Review of Research for School Leaders: 1998

Edited by Peter S. Hlebowitsh and William G. Wraga

This review, sponsored by NAESP and NASSP, is an ongoing project which offers school leaders, administrators, and teachers insights into research on a wide range of school issues. This edition contains articles by leading educators on middle schools, extra-classroom activities, mathematics reform in high school, and dropouts.

Item #ARR-RR1098
$45 members; $54.95 nonmembers
(add $5.50 shipping and handling)

To order, call the National Principals' Resource Center at 800-38-NAESP, fax 800-39-NAESP, or send check or purchase order to:

National Principals' Resource Center
1615 Duke Street, Alexandria, VA 22314-3483